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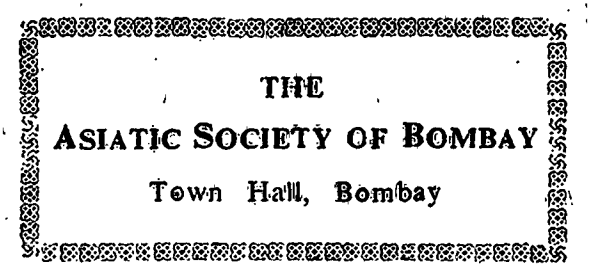

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CENTRAL ASIA, AND ITS QUESTION

BEING

A PAPER

READ IN THE SPEECH-ROOM OF HARROW SCHOOL,

On the 18th March, 1873.

B. 2860

BY

COL. SIR FREDERIC JOHN GOLDSMID, C.B., K.C.S.I.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

A KIND and genial reception, and the expression of favourable opinions from those whose presence at the reading was, of itself, an honour, have induced me to print this very rough summary of a very important subject. Notwithstanding the somewhat ambitious title of the Paper, no pretensions to supply in it a history, or even a key to a complex question, is advanced. But it is not impossible that the perusal of the following pages may lead to a study of comprehensive works; and, in some cases, such study may not unnaturally tend to the prosecution of further and fuller inquiries; which process, again, may result in the acquisition of knowledge fitting the possessor, at some future period, to grapple with an eventuality which, whatever its substance, casts beforehand the shadow of a difficulty. In such contingency, the map for which I am indebted to the courteous intervention of General Adye, and of which the Lecture was rather designed to be explanatory than *vice versâ*, will not have been exhibited or interpreted in vain.

HASTINGS, 29*th March*, 1873.

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CENTRAL ASIA, AND ITS QUESTION.

TOWARDS the close of the past year the interest of a large section of the British public was fairly aroused to certain regions which, in spite of classical associations and medieval repute, had, as a rule, either passed away from the recollection, or failed to maintain the continuous attention of modern English politicians. And to judge from the mass of newly-printed and newly-spoken opinions on this one topic which almost every day brings forth in our metropolis of many interests, it cannot be said that the excitement thus awakened has subsided or even diminished.

The subject in question has been rather vaguely characterized as that of "Central Asia." I say "vaguely," because the centre is somewhat uncertain. Are we to take meridians of longitude or parallels of latitude, or both, to find it? For our present purpose the matter may be appropriately considered under two heads:—

1st. What is meant by the term "Central Asia" geographically, and with reference to other parts of the vast Asiatic Continent?

2ndly. What is meant by the "Central Asian Question"?

Practically, however, we shall find that an exposition of the geographical status will leave little to be said in the way of defining a political complication inseparable from it.

In giving to the paper which I am about to read this evening the title of "Central Asia, or the Countries between Europe and British India," I have proposed to treat mainly of that quasi-central part of the largest division of the globe which would be comprehended under the second and more minute definition. Indeed, I shall only be following the example of newspaper controversialists and lecturers of the day if, in speaking of Central Asia as it is found on the map, I confine myself to those countries east of the Caspian but west of Chinese territory which have acquired a special interest in connection with the popular designation, without accepting the more comprehensive interpretations warranted by a stricter adherence to geography. And were it not that Persia, Afghanistan, and even Baluchistan belong, more or less, to the political case to be set before you, I should have been content to have substituted the simple name of "Turkistan" for that now adopted, in the sense in which the compound term "Central Asia" is commonly received. This Turkistan comprises not merely Trans-Oxiana, but the countries of the Western centre of Asia, and therefore Khiva, as well as Bokhara, Khokand, Yarkand, and the Russian conquests exhibited like a wedge driven in southward amid the independent

Khanates, *i. e.* territories of the independent khans or chiefs. And here, it may be said, it is that the public interest is at this particular moment concentrated. Let us briefly review these Khanates according to their position on the map.

KHIVA.

First, on the westward, there is Khiva. This province, known to history as Kharazm, and by its neighbours as Urganj, holds, according to Vambéry, the former appellation from a Persian word signifying "warlike." Orientals habitually account for the names of places in the wildest and most incongruous manner; but I confess to miss even the word alluded to in the present instance. Nor can I gather more satisfactory information from Richardson, who gives currency to a fanciful derivation of the name from a Persian expression of Cyrus. It seems to me, however, that we may be content to accept, as fact, that the Kharazmis of Eastern annals are the Chorasmi * (χοράσμιοι) of Herodotus, described by Lemprière as "a people of Asia near the Oxus."

There is no actual lack of published notices of Khiva, and many of these are readily procurable for reference. Vambéry's comparatively recent journey has been for ten years before the public in its English dress, and possesses the sensational element to a sufficient extent to make it exceptionally attractive. Abbott's two interesting volumes, and Shaks-

* Gaisford's 'Herodotus,' vol i., Thalia 93.

peare's and Taylour Thomson's short narratives, are equally the result of actual visits, effected at least within the last forty years, and by Englishmen. Col. Sheil, once H.M. Minister in Persia, in his notes to Lady Sheil's 'Life and Manners' in that country, published in 1856, states that two Englishmen, named Thomson and Hogg, undertook, almost alone, a journey from Asiatic Russia to Khiva; that their adventures are shortly described in Jonas Hanway; and that they were probably the first Englishmen who beheld the Uzbek capital. But I think there is evidence that one of our countrymen, Mr. Anthony Jenkinson, sent out by the Muscovy Company, was there, or at least in the province, more than 300 years ago: for we find him at three days' journey from the old mouth of the Oxus in the Caspian Sea, entertained by a chief named Azim Khan, who with his brethren "ruled all from the Caspian Sea to Urgence."* Now Urgence must be Urganj, and we learn that our traveller moved from his entertainer's camp towards Bokhara, or eastward. I may mention that the repast of which he partook on the occasion noted consisted of the flesh of a wild horse and mare's milk without bread.†

Mouraviev's journey to Khiva in 1819–20 is also a well-written and instructive report. But I shall have to refer to more than one Russian work as I

* According to Purchas, the original edition of whose 'Pilgrims' was published in 1617.

† Purchas's 'Pilgrims,' p. 480.

go on; and it may suffice here to state that Russian explorations have not been infrequent in these tracts since the days of Mouraviev.

Many authors, English as well as foreign, have also described this part of Central Asia without personal knowledge or experience of the locality. Among these, well-known names might be cited; few perhaps with greater respect than that of Sir John Malcolm, whose 'History of Persia' cannot but possess great value for the Oriental student. In that work, while reviewing a series of revolutions in Persia for 500 years, or from the accession of Ismael Samani to the conquests of Jenghiz Khan and Taimur, he makes occasional mention of Khiva under its name of Kharazm. During this period, extending from A.D. 874 to 1380, it was assailed by the Seljuk Tartar Alp Arslan, who has the credit of having bridged the Oxus. Some notion of the power of this remarkable monarch may be gathered from the statement that he ruled from that river to the deserts of Arabia. He defeated and took prisoner Romanus, surnamed Diogenes, who married the widow of Constantine XI. Malik Sanjar, also, another of the Seljuk monarchs and virtually King of Persia, bestowed, we are informed, Kharazm on his cup-bearer; and the descendant of the latter, named Takush, was strong enough to defeat and kill Toghral III., a successor of Sanjar.*

* A.D. 1193. Malcolm's 'History of Persia,' vol. i., p. 380.

Yet nowhere does Khiva or Kharazm appear with any historical distinctiveness, nor have we requisite material to attempt the exhumation of its annals as an isolated State, even if the task were possible of accomplishment. I have alluded to the great Tartar invasion; and in the Uzbeks who rule in Khiva, and have probably ruled there for centuries, we still find a Tartar race. Lieut. Wood, the explorer of the Oxus, an officer whose labours have, unfortunately, only become appreciated now that he has passed away from his sphere of usefulness, thus speaks of them:—

"A tribe of Tartar, or rather Scythian, origin, which in a comparatively modern era crossed the Jaxartes and fixed themselves in Trans Oxiana. The descendants of the ruthless Jenghiz Khan then occupied that country, but were soon forcibly dispossessed. Their chief, the renowned Baber, after vainly endeavouring to stem the torrent of invasion, yielded to its strength, and led his forces into Hindostan, where he established the Moghul Empire, called after Moghul Khan, the founder of his line. Those of the disinherited nation who neither submitted to the Uzbek nor accompanied their chief, retired across the river Oxus; and in the Turkomans of that locality I think we may recognize their descendants. . . . . Though the language of the various hordes that now roam over Central Asia are different, there is reason to believe that the Huns of

antiquity are the prototypes of them all, whether designated Kalmuks or Kirgiz, Uzbek, or Turkoman. . . . The Uzbeks are semi-Muhamadans, and consider an intolerant persecution of the other sect as the best evidence of the sincerity of their own faith and of their attachment to the Prophet. They are much fettered by their priests, to whom they yield implicit obedience in all things temporal and spiritual." *

This character, though applied especially to the Uzbeks of Kunduz, a State within the now declared limits of Afghanistan, will doubtless serve to describe, with truth, the Uzbeks of Khiva and in Turkistan generally.

If we are to believe Muhamadan writers, and Abulgházi, the one concerned, is perhaps among the more trustworthy, Tatar and Mongol were two brothers whose names became generic appellations of thousands of Asiatic families; the orthography of the former having been modified by the Latin writers of the thirteenth century, who, with a certain suspicious significance, introduced the letter *r* at the end of the first syllable.†

* 'Journey to the Source of the Oxus,' Murray, 1872, pp. 140, 141.

† Mr. Arthur Lumley Davids writes: "Some of the Eastern writers have derived the name *Tatar* from a river, on the banks of which was the original seat of this tribe; but all coincide in employing the term as the designation of a particular body of people, and not as that of a race. The alteration of this name into Tartar by the Latin writers of the thirteenth century appears to have arisen from the similarity of its sound to their own Tartarus, the corruption being rendered somewhat

The inhabited part of Khiva is estimated at less than 200 miles from north to south, and 100 from east to west;* and is confined to the lower section of the Oxus, south of the Sea of Aral. The remainder of the Khanate, or rather the outlying country acknowledging in any way the sovereignty of the Khan, may be considered, with few exceptions, a perfect desert. The principal places in the cultivated and populated lands are Yenghi, or New Urganj, and Khiva the capital. Köhnah, or Old Urganj, once the capital, is now reduced to insignificance, and of its former splendour there only remain two ruins of towers of the same massive designs as the other towers of Central Asia. Vambéry eulogizes the fertility of the soil, and considers the corn, rice, silk, cotton, and a dye-yielding root called "ruyan," especially excellent. As regards the fruits, he holds that not Persia and Turkey alone, but even Europe itself would find it difficult to contest their superior merit. He instances apples, peaches, pomegranates, and, above all, melons "renowned as far even as remote Pekin, so that the

appropriate by the terrors which the incursions of Tchingis Khan and his descendants excited." And he quotes the words of St. Louis to his mother as remarkable, hereon: "Erigat nos, mater, cœleste solatium, quin, si perveniant ipsi, vel nos ipsos quos vocamus *Tartaros, ad suas Tartaraes sedes* unde exierunt retrudemus, vel ipsi nos omnes ad cœlum advehent."—Preliminary discourse to 'Grammar of the Turkish Language,' Parbury and Allen, 1832.

* Burnes: 'Travels into Bokhara; General and Geographical Memoir on Part of Central Asia,' 2nd edition, Murray, 1835.

Sovereign of the Celestial Empire never forgets, when presents flow to him from Chinese Tartary, to beg for some Urganji melons." Among manufactures, the Urganj striped, two-coloured, stuff dressing-gown, the Hazarasp gown, and the Tash-hanz linens, as also the brass of Khiva, are cited. The trade is with Russia, Persia, and Herat, but chiefly with the first.*

The inhabitants consist of Uzbeks, Turkomans, Karakalpaks, Kazaks, Sarts, and Persians. Of these the Uzbeks may be described as fixed cultivators of the soil, dwelling under the protection of their own legitimate chief. Vambéry does not hesitate to give them a good character, adding that the Khivan Uzbek not being well instructed in the doctrine of the Muhamadanism which he professes, retains not only many of the national usages of heathenism, but also of the religious observances of the Parsis or Fire-worshippers. These, I need scarcely tell you, were the ancient inhabitants of Persia, converted or driven out by the early Muhamadan invaders, excepting from the account the few families settled still at Yezd, Kirman, and one or two other cities.

The Turkomans are divided into numerous tribes, and are scattered in hordes along the northern frontier of Persia, and north-west of Afghanistan.

* Vambéry: 'Travels in Central Asia,' Murray, 1864.

Those in Khiva Proper belong chiefly to three tribes, of whom I will speak anon.

The Karakalpak, Blackcaps, inhabit the farther bank of the Oxus, but have been subject to Khiva from time immemorial. Vambéry states their number to be computed at 10,000 tents.

Of the Kazaks but few are subject to Khiva. The Sarts are the ancient Persian population of Kharazm, and called, as elsewhere, Tajik; and the so-called Persian section of the population are colonists or slaves. Many of the latter, however, as lately explained by Mr. Mitchell with reference to Russian prisoners, prefer an easy livelihood in Khiva, to taking advantage of liberty, if offered on condition of returning to their homes.

When Mr. Taylour Thomson was at Khiva in 1841, he learned that the population from where the Khan collected his revenues amounted to 100,000 families: that he had an army of 30,000 horsemen, with 17 guns and a mortar, besides 100 regular soldiers and a Russian artilleryman; that he possessed, moreover, 500 men slaves of his own, and 4000 in the employment of subjects on the State lands.*

BOKHARA.

Crossing the Oxus, and descending the lands known to Oriental history as Mawar 'al Nahr,—literally, in Arabic, "that which is beyond the

* 'Life and Manners in Persia,' by Lady Sheil. Murray, 1856 (notes).

river," a name which must have been given by Arab invaders from the south,—we come to Bokhara situated just below the 40th parallel of latitude, possibly, as Burnes infers, the "Bazaria" of Quintus Curtius. It is mentioned in the opening sections of the eighth book, later in which is related the murder of Clytus, and where Alexander's conquests of the Massagetæ, Dahæ, and Sogdiani appear to have been accomplished. Sogdiana, if not the province of Bokhara itself, must have been in its immediate vicinity. Samarcand is, in fact, situated in the valley of the Sogd.

According to a Russian authority, M. Veniukoff, that part of the Oxus which skirts Bokhara, and, indeed, an extent of 540 miles along its banks, from Balkh to Fitnek, a southern limit of populated Khiva, is a sultry valley in which, while there are towns and villages at the ferries or intersections of karavan routes, there are but few fixed inhabitants. At Charjui, a point within this range, he gives to the river a breadth of 235 and a depth of 4 fathoms, but is not sanguine as to its ever becoming a commercial highway between Europe and India.*

The distance from Khiva to Bokhara by the high road (one of three recognized routes) is laid down at 60 parasangs, or perhaps 210 miles, in eight marches averaging not less than 26 miles each. The first march of 21 miles is through a cultivated

* 'The Pamir and Sources of the Amu-Daria.'—Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1866.

country rich in mulberry trees, and within an hour from the Oxus ferry, at this point so wide that both banks are barely visible at the same time. The second march takes the traveller across the river; and the third, out of Khiva territory, through a fair amount of cultivation on the right bank, to the edge of the Tartary desert, where the Kirgiz find pasturage for their flocks. The next two marches hug the cultivated strip along the river side, avoiding as much as possible the sandy wastes on the left hand. From the point then attained the caravan road is again beside the river for between 30 and 40 miles, whence begins the passage of the desert in earnest, a task which must be faced if Bokhara be the goal in prospect; and this trial is undergone for some 60 miles before the propinquity of the city is made known by canals, cultivated fields, and finally, most grateful gardens. Vambéry seems to have turned at once to the desert from the fifth march, and thus experienced a hundred miles of suffering and privations under a hot July sun.*

On Bokhara there is unquestionably fuller and more detailed information than on Khiva. At present I will not attempt anything like a correct list of travellers thither, whose personal experience of the country has been recorded. Names which naturally occur to me are those of the brothers

* Vambéry, whose description is well worth referring to at pp. 160, 161.

Nicolo and Maffeo Polo in the thirteenth, and Mr. Anthony Jenkinson in the sixteenth century; in later years Baron Meyendorff and other Russian officers; among Englishmen, Burnes, Conolly, Stoddart, Dr. Wolff, and more; among foreigners generally, M. Vambéry is eminent; but I may here casually mention that there are recorded far more than 100 names of travellers, chiefly Russians, who visited Central Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. General Ignatiev, now and for many years past Russian Ambassador at the Porte, has, I believe, published a narrative of his travels in Central Asia. When at Constantinople some eight or ten years ago, I heard him speak of his residence in Bokhara. Though a recognized official visitor there, he was in a kind of imprisonment, and those who brought him his food were made to taste it before him in token that it was innocuous.

The fact is, that this particular region, though farther from the natural boundaries of Europe and European civilization, has been found more accessible and less isolated by surrounding deserts than Khiva. Nor has the latter ever attained the world-wide reputation of Bokhara, which, at least in the estimation of Muhamadans, is the seat of exceptional learning and sanctity. But it has lost much of its greatness in recent years, and has forfeited the privilege of practical independence still retained by its old rival and enemy. Of the eight natural and

political divisions of the kingdom or khanate recorded by Burnes, it may be doubted whether more than half now nominally remain; and even the actual frontiers given many years later by Vambéry have been modified to the detriment of the reigning Amir. The deserts north and west, and the Oxus south, still serve to mark the limits in those directions; and on the left bank of the Oxus, Charjui and Karki belong also to Bokhara; but it is no longer bounded by Khokand on the east, for Samarkand, Tashkand, and Khojand intervene in their new geographical classification, as parts of Russian Turkistan. Vambéry thinks two millions and a half not too high a figure for the estimated population, and divides them into Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirgiz, Arabs, Marvis, Persians, Hindus, and Jews.

The first is the dominant tribe, and is that of the "Amir," a title which seems rather to belong to Bokhara than to Khiva; the Tajiks, similar to the Sarts, or Persian aborigines, are in great number also; the Kirgiz are few.

The Arabs, reckoned at 60,000, are the conquerors from the south, whom, it is presumed, we must hold responsible for the local Arabic names, such as Mawar 'al Nahr, and many others. Indeed, the native name of the Oxus, "Amu," shown by Colonel Yule, the editor of 'Marco Polo,' to have been "Al Nahr," * the river, in earlier Muhamadan

* See the exhaustive and interesting introduction to Lieut. Wood's book before quoted.

history, is not improbably a vulgarism derived from "Um al Nahr," or "the mother of rivers," a title strictly warranted by precedent and common usage among Arabs in regard to so remarkable a stream. Balkh, for example, is called the "Um 'al Bilad," mother of cities.

The Marvis are descended from Persian captives taken at Marv more than sixty years ago. The Persians, like those of Khiva, are in compulsory or voluntary slavery; and recent Russian report places them in number at the high figure of 10,000.

Of the Hindus I can speak from personal knowledge, as it was my lot to reside for many months at Shikarpur, in Upper Sind, the great depôt, as it were, for Bokhara Hindus. They are industrious, plodding traffickers and usurers, content to leave their houses and families to manage the money transactions of Persians, Afghans, and Uzbeks, men of a different creed and totally different mould from themselves; and living in self-imposed exile until they outgrow domestic affections, or become strange to their own kin. Vambéry reckons that there are 500 of them in Bokhara; and of the Jews about 10,000. The latest Russian authorities, however, reduce the number of the latter to some 2000. The Hindu merchants find their way to Bokhara and back by the Bolan Pass, Kandahar, Kabul, and Khulm.

When Burnes visited Bokhara in 1832, he

reckoned the population of the city to amount to 150,000. Captain Kostenko, in 1870, basing his calculations on an estimate of 15,000 houses only, diminishes the sum total to 74,000, or one-half. He reckons the infantry soldiers to consist of 10,000, and the artillery of 1000 men, and states that the Amir keeps 300 cavalry and 3000 foot besides in Hissar. Of the infantry hardly 200, he says, are provided with even flint guns, and of 200 guns in store, scarcely twenty are fit for use. The climate is described by Burnes as salubrious and pleasant, dry, and in the winter very cold, proved by the freezing of the Oxus. The summer heat rarely exceeded 90° in the capital, though in the desert it was above 100. Besides the Oxus there is a river called the Zarafshan, rising in the mountains south of Kokhand, which passes north of Samarkand and Bokhara, and fertilizes the lands near both towns. The Sir, or Jaxartes, is now no longer within the Amir's dominions, as it was in Burnes's time. Karakol, Karshi, and Karki, deserve mention among the more important towns still under his control.

The vegetable productions of the country are tolerably abundant, and fruits are celebrated. The sheepskins and goats' wool are well known, and much esteemed in Persia and Afghanistan.

To summarize in a few words the history of Bokhara—the aborigines were a Persian population, and for centuries, perhaps, subjects of the vast

Persian empire of old. Nor did the Arab invasions and innovations, on the spread of Muhamadanism, change their immediate allegiance in this respect. But the incursion of the Mongols was attended with different results; and, lastly, the Uzbeks became rulers, to the exclusion of the Persians. New revolutions ensued, and conquests and losses of territory followed one the other for a series of years. The Uzbeks still maintain the sovereign power, and religious fanaticism has increased in a high degree under their favour and support. It is just thirty years ago that Colonel Stoddart, after painful years, and Captain Conolly, after painful months, of captivity, were cruelly murdered in Bokhara by sanction or order of the Amir, Nasr Ullah, father to the present Amir, Sáiad Muzafar; and the tale is a sad one to be told to Englishmen of Englishmen. In considering it, we have at least the satisfaction of feeling that both officers met their final fate as Christian soldiers and gentlemen; and that their services, though unrewarded, and sufferings, though unavenged, have not failed to secure to their memories the sympathy of survivors, as also of future generations.

KHOKAND.

The mode of writing Khokand, according to our latest maps, is not that invariably adopted. I have seen it spelt Khokan, Koukan, Kokaun, Kokun, and

Khokand. Vambéry, adopting the last, makes the word a possible corruption of "Khubkand," a beautiful spot. Without venturing any decided opinion hereon, I think that "kand" must be the second syllable, where such important places as Yarkand and Tashkand are found east and west of it; and the word "Farghánah," which all writers agree to have been its more ancient name, conveys a Perso-Arabic signification of pleasurable repose, not out of character with the Persian "Khub."

When Burnes wrote of the country, the power of its chief, Muhamad Ali, was on the rise; he had established his influence over Tashkand, and many of the Kazak tribes between him and Russia. He was, moreover, disputing with the Mir of Kunduz the right to Darwaz, a district now included within the Afghan frontier. The present chief has but a narrowly circumscribed tract of Independent Tartary to call his own. He has Russian annexations north and west; Shahr Sabz, a questionable district of Bokhara, with the Káratau Mountains to the south-west and south; and Yarkand to the east and south-east. Burnes remarked that, while Khokand did not hold much intercourse with Bokhara, the communication between it and Constantinople was more regular than that of the other states of Turkistan; and that this practice was in vogue long after Burnes wrote, I can answer from personal knowledge. Among many photographs collected by me

in the course of travel and duty, is one of a Khokand Envoy to the Porte, with whom I had much talk at Karachi, on his way to Constantinople, *viâ* Bombay and the Red Sea. He was in manner, in dress, and in physique, the Uzbek of Turkistan, and his Turkish approximated sufficiently to what is called the Osmanli of Constantinople to enable us to understand each other. But this mission, and the missions of other envoys, have not been of avail to keep off the Russian enemy, and the Russians and the Khokandis have been left to fight it out without the intervention of a third power.

Khokand is peopled by Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazaks, Kirgiz, of whom I have already spoken, and Kipchaks. Vambéry considers these last to typify the original Turkish race, and his judgment is formed from their physiognomy, character, language, and customs. He professes inability to detect in the Turkish that they speak a single Persian or Arabic word; and classes them, as in bravery, superior to all nations of Central Asia, being "the truest specimen remaining to us of the immense hordes that revolutionized all Asia."* He states that they can only number from 5000 to 6000 tents; and yet the Khans of the Kipchak, sprung from Jenghiz, were once the ruling dynasty in Kazan, Astrakhan and dependencies up to A.D. 1506.† There were colonies of Jews in Namaghan

* 'Travels in Central Asia,' p. 383.

† Bianchi and Kieffer, 'Dictionnaire Turc-Français.' Paris, 1850.

and Marghilan, but of these I can find no recent information.

The capital town bears the name of the Khanate; and is said* to have 70,000, or according to late Russian authority, 100,000 inhabitants. It is placed in the latest maps on the right bank of a tributary of the Sir, or Jaxârtes, formed by the junction of two streams rising in a western spur of the Alaï Mountains. Burnes places it on both sides of the Sir, but then he wrote from hearsay. By the desert route and following a course almost due east, Khokand may be reached from Khiva in about fifteen days; but the journey must be a trying one. The computation of 3,000,000 inhabitants† for the whole Khanate requires considerable reduction owing to the territorial losses of the last few years. Tashkand alone, in 1866, could boast of a population of 64,416.‡

For the following summary of political events in Khokand I am again indebted to Vambéry, who appears to me the best authority on this little-investigated subject.

The present reigning family pretends to a direct descent from Jenghiz Khan; but the family of Jenghiz was dethroned by Taimur; and after Baber, the last descendant of Taimur in Khokand, the Shaibani and other Kipchak and Kirgiz chiefs seized on the Government. The late ruling Khan, Muha-

* Maunder's 'Treasury of Geography.' † Vambéry.
‡ 'Almanack de Gotha.' Russian accounts say about 100,000.

mad Ali, was of Kipchak origin. He waged war with Nasr Ullah, Amir of Bokhara, in pursuance of an old family policy. Khokand had been incorporated into the former state and had forcibly freed itself, making alliance with Yarkand and certain neighbouring States now included within the Chinese dominions; and the consequence was a kind of chronic animosity between Khokand and Bokhara.

Although the two hostile Khans above mentioned had died, that is the Bokhara chief had killed the chief of Khokand, and the survivor had been carried off by sickness, the contest was continued by their successors, and up to 1863 there seems to have been fighting without cessation. Peace was only obtained at that period by the division of the Khanate into two Governments, each under a grandson of Muhamad Ali. The wars with Russia will be spoken of under the head of Russian Turkistan.

YARKAND.

From the town of Ush, on the eastern frontier of the Khanate of Khokand, to Kashgar is a ten days' journey over a mountainous country.* And a few marches farther in a south-easterly direction bring us to Yarkand and the countries immediately north of Cashmir and British India. Time will not allow of any detailed account of the interesting region of

* Vambéry.

Eastern or Chinese Turkistan; but the records of the Royal Geographical Society have recently furnished many new and valuable data for its illustration; and the appointment of Mr. Shaw, the indefatigable and intelligent Yarkland explorer, as Commissioner of Ladakh, is a warrant of progress in our relations with the people and lands north of the Karakorum.

I will add a few words on the tracts north and south of the more westerly of the Khanates just discussed, *viz.* Khiva and Bokhara, without reference to the political question of sovereignty. East and west of the Sea of Aral, and generally from its centre northwards, is the country of whose brave queen and people Herodotus writes with some detail in the closing sections of his first book; a country now occupied by the Kirgiz nomads of the Steppes, a pastoral community bearing a reputation for valour certainly inferior to that gained by the conquerors of Cyrus, the Massagetæ of 2000 years ago. While on this subject I may recall the account of Thomyris, the Boadicea of the Scythian plains, given by Herodotus. Her address to the dead Cyrus, on dipping his head into a skin filled with human blood, will not readily be forgotten:* "Thou hast destroyed me, living and conquering thee in fight, having taken my son by stratagem; and I, as I have vowed,

* Gaisford's 'Herodotus': Συ μὲν ἐμὲ ζώουσάν τε καὶ νικῶσάν σε μάχῃ ἀπώλεσας παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν ἑλὼν δόλῳ. σὲ δ ἐγὼ, κατάπερ ἠπείλησα, αἵματος κορέσω.—S. 214, Clio.

will satiate thee with blood." Ctesias, it is true, tells quite a different story. He goes farther East, apparently, in search of a similar legend, and makes Amorges, King of the Sacæ, the conqueror of Cyrus, but does not kill him until some time afterwards in a war with the Derbices, when he is mortally wounded by an Indian.*

Vambéry, in opposition to Wood and others, but in accordance with the views of Sir Alexander Burnes, considers the Kirgizes to be the same as the Kazaks, and intelligibly explains the name Kirgiz to be a Turkish compound, meaning "wanderer in the plains." On the other hand, I have one dictionary which translates the Tartar word "Kazak" as "robber"; but this interpretation appears to bear no original meaning, and to be admissible only by virtue of the predatory habits of the Cossacks themselves. Doubtless the comparatively peaceful habits of the Kirgiz on the more northerly shores of the Aral at the present day, are mainly, if not wholly, attributable to a restraining superior influence exercised over this particular territory. Uncontrolled, there is abundant evidence to prove their habits quite as predatory as pastoral.

We learn, on good authority, that many years ago there were two routes to Khiva from Orenberg, the capital of the Government of that name, and the most southerly of the old European Russian dis-

* 'Purchas, his Pilgrimage,' p. 401. London, 1617.

tricts bounded by the Ural Mountains. One of these routes was east and the other west of the Sea of Aral. The former, according to M. Khanikoff, had its first authentic delineation by a mission of Messrs. Gladishef and Muravin, who performed the journey from Orsk to Khiva in 1740. In later times it was described to be about 1000 English miles in length, of which two-thirds passed through a barren, sandy country, the fertile and irrigated portions being for the most part those nearest Orenberg. The second, and more than a hundred miles the shorter, abounded also with water, pasturage, and fuel at the outset; then changed to salt marshes and waste; then rising to what is called the plateau, or table-land of the Ust Urt, afforded scanty pasturage and precarious supplies of good water. Descending the Ust Urt on the southern side, and turning towards the populated parts of Khiva, it yielded sufficient fuel and water, and partial pasturage. To what extent these routes, or either of them, have been since rendered available for the march of troops or for the passage of caravans, intelligence is scarcely obtained with the same facility as for the several roads from the Caspian to Khiva. It is certain that in 1839 General Perovski's force, which attempted the more westerly of the two routes, was unable to advance farther than Ak Boulak, a post barely one-third of the whole distance which it was contemplated the army would traverse. Russian authori-

ties mention the plateau of the Ust Urt to be 240 miles in length, and 160 in breadth, or the actual extent between the Caspian and Aral. It rises to an average elevation of 620 feet.

South of the Khanates, to the east, is the Afghan, and west, the Persian, frontier. The former has been dissected in the political correspondence of the day, and the names of Badakhshan, Wakhan, the Panjah, and the Gokcha, will have become as familiar to those who interest themselves in these questions as the old names of Bactriana, Sogdiana, the Oxus and the Ochus, are to the classical student. The latter is divided from Kharazm by a kind of neutral zone occupied by the Turkomans, the most noted of Eastern highwaymen.

A word also on the two great rivers of Central Asia, which are, in the west, indisputably the Jaxartes or Sihun, and Oxus or Jihun, called the Sir and Amu at the present day. The first is formed by minor rivers fed by streams issuing from the mountain ranges north and south of Khokand respectively, and the Narin, rising from the southern slopes of the Kirgiz Ala Táu, and north of the Tian-Shan. Below Namaghan it zigzags in a south-westerly course past Khokand, receives the waters of other streams from the southern hills, and turns abruptly north towards Tashkand to make a long north-westerly bend to the Upper Aral. The waters forming the second, issue from the Kara Tau

ranges north, and Hindu Kush south—to speak generally, from the western limits of the Pamiv table-land; and the junction of the Surkhab and Panjah rivers from these particular directions becomes the larger volume of water called Amu Daria. This important river first receives the Gokchah in its passage from Badakhshan westward, then bending somewhat towards Kunduz and Balkh, on its south, takes a long, continuous sweep to the north-west, enriching Bokhara and wholly sustaining Khiva, till it reaches the Lower Aral.

RUSSIAN TURKISTAN.

But our account of Turkistan, or West Central Asia, would indeed be incomplete were we to omit that important part of it which has been added to the Russian dominions. The numerous papers translated by Mr. Michell on the subject, independently of his own published memoranda, all references of high practical value, render the task of compiling an intelligible account comparatively facile.

General Perovski, in relating the circumstances of his unfortunate expedition to Khiva in 1839, has prefaced his narrative by a historical sketch of Central Asia, and the causes which led to direct Russian aggression. Commencing with a mission of the Bishop of Shernburg to India by way of the Caspian and Independent Tartary, the credit of which is given to Alfred the Great of England, he passes

at once from the ninth to the thirteenth century, taking the latter period as a starting point for the maintenance of "frequent intercourse between Europe and the Western portion of Central Asia for political and commercial objects." He reviews the movements of the Crusaders, the Greeks, Venetians, and Genoese in Eastern Europe, and the invasion of Jenghíz Khan from the east westwards; showing the result of such simultaneous action to be a necessary *rapprochement* of Europe to Asia, and *vice versâ*. This was the especial feature of the thirteenth century, when the Polo family were foremost in the rank of distinguished travellers. I have seen a list of no less than thirty-five names, including those of the brothers Nicholas and Matthew, and the younger Marco, Polo, whose travels in Central Asia are said to have been recorded within a period of 265 years, or from 1243 to 1508. Some of them may be mere compilers, but I do not so understand the matter. A second list, comprising the names of thirty-three more travellers visiting Central Asia between 1558 and 1684, shows nearly half the number to have been Englishmen.*

At the close of the seventeenth and commencement of the eighteenth century, Russia, under Peter the Great, sent out her explorers to penetrate into the same regions from the north and west. Peter wished to establish commercial intercourse with India; but the independent Khanates beyond

* See *ante*, p. 15.

the Steppes were not quite prepared to encourage so civilized an object by giving free passage to commerce through their territories. He, however, when able to turn his attention from the Swedes and Turks, entered into some sort of correspondence with Khiva; for it is urged on behalf of Russia, that so far back as 1703, the Czar received the Khan's allegiance, at a time when the latter was sorely pressed by the Amir of Bokhara; and from 1714 to 1717 efforts were made to establish Russian authority on the eastern shores of the Caspian, and generally in Turkistan. Accounts of two expeditions with this object in view are given in the 'Journal of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society' for 1853. One was despatched from Siberia under Colonel Bucholz, and one from Astrakhan under Prince Bekovich.

But although Peter the Great continued to push forward his scheme of intercourse with India, and for this purpose sought to make a ready road through Bokhara and intervening countries, no positive measure of occupation or annexation in Central Asia seems to have been carried out until after that monarch's death, in 1725. He had, by his own presence and that of a numerous army, made the tribes on the seaside of the Kharazm desert accustomed to personal contact with the Europeans or semi-Europeans north of the Steppes and the Caspian; but by treaty with Persia he had abandoned claim to possession of any tracts east of the latter. In 1732, however,

the Khan of the Lesser Horde of Kirgiz was formally received under Russian protection, and a considerable extent of country came under Russian organization and supervision.

"Dating from this time," says General Perovski, "civil order was gradually introduced into the depths of Central Asia. In 1822 a series of regulations were promulgated for the Government of the Kirgizes, who wandered in the Irtish Ishim Steppe, and from 1834 they are under the jurisdiction of local courts. In 1834 the Alexandrovski fortification was erected near Kaidak, a bay of the Caspian. In 1846 the fortresses of Orenburg and Uralsk were founded in the heart of the Steppe, on the rivers Irgiz and Tuegai respectively. In 1847 Fort Raimsk was erected near the mouth of the Sir Daria, and on the reduction of Ak Mashhad in 1853, the Russians established themselves along the whole of this river." In 1854, the writer himself proceeded on a second expedition to Khiva, accepted the nominal submission of the Khan, Muhamad Amin, at the city itself, and returned.

From General Perovski let us now turn to Romanovski, one of the principal actors in the drama of conquest and annexation, which appears to have reached a new phase in the departure of the expedition to Khiva now attracting public attention at home. He states that in 1854, or at the outset of the Crimean war, it was resolved by a Special Com-

mittee, and confirmed by the Emperor Nicholas, to connect the then newly-established Sir Daria line with the newly-advanced Siberian line of frontier. This was considered to be the best measure to secure the object of the advance into the Steppes, made already by the force of circumstances. The question is too wide a one to admit of present description and illustration. It would carry us into China and Russian progress China-ward, a subject which, though thrown out of this night's consideration, is of very great interest and importance. We are, however, concerned to know that between the years 1850 and 1860 the Russian detached posts, forts, and military settlements were "scattered over the vast surface of the Steppes, on the one side from the Ural and Irtish to the north-eastern part of the Caspian as far as the northern parts of the Sea of Aral and Sir Daria; and on the other as far as the Ili River at the base of the Tian Shan Mountains." The Mangishlak Peninsula on the west, Fort Perovski on the Sir Daria, and the Ili River west of Kulja, will exhibit the supposed limit as nearly as possible on the 44th parallel of latitude.

In spite of endeavouring to consolidate without further extension, and of keeping on the best terms with the rulers and people of the Khanates of Central Asia, the Russians complained that their relations south of the Steppes were far from satisfactory. Khiva and Kokhand were usually hostile,

and Bokhara was not so friendly as she might be. A flotilla on the Sea of Aral, and other moves, offensive or defensive, kept the Khivans from open warfare, but Khokand not only refused to make concessions to the northern intruders, but became their assailants within the limits occupied. The connection of the Orenburg and Siberian lines was looked upon as the fittest remedial measure. Romanovsky informs us that, "while accepting this decision, which must have inevitably led one way or another to the subjection of Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva to our influence, the Russian Government was far from entertaining any ambitious views."

In accordance, then, with the approved scheme, Russian troops took possession of the trans-Ili region, built forts Vernoe and Kastik, north of the Issik Lake and Ala Tau mountains; destroyed the Kokhand forts of Pishpek and Tokmak, and, later, captured that of Yani Kurgan; and carried on several important local military surveys, with a view, if necessary, to further operations. These were occurrences of the years between 1854 and 1864. Then began the work of actually connecting the two Russian frontiers. A line was first proposed to be drawn from about Fort Vernoë east to Anlia Ata, the small Kara Tan range, and Julek in the west; but this plan being overruled, an advanced line was substituted, comprising Shem-

kand. To put the new proposal into execution, it became necessary to take forcible possession of Aulia Ata, the town of Turkistan, and Shemkand. Troops were, therefore, again put in requisition, and the end achieved. The despatches mention that at Aulia Ata the enemy's loss was not known, but that the inhabitants buried 307 bodies, and there were 390 wounded Khokandians; the Russians themselves having only three men slightly wounded, and one officer and one man bruised. On the two other occasions the Russians lost, in all, one officer and ten men killed; but there is no mention made of casualties on the other side.

The immediate consequence of these strong measures was the publication of a circular manifesto addressed to the Embassies and Legations of H.I. Majesty at foreign courts, and couched in the most conciliatory and moderate language, explaining how the force of circumstances rather than the exercise of free will had brought about the results above described, and the formation of a new province aptly designated Russian Turkistan.

I will not attempt any long or detailed account of subsequent operations. A glance at the map will show that the line taken up and declared eight years ago has been further extended to the south, and, to repeat Captain Trench's appropriate expression, a "wedge" driven in, which, whatever its nature or purport, can hardly imply permanence or

anything but disquiet and disorder. Suffice it to summarize the main facts.

After the formation of Russian Turkistan, the Bokhara and Khokand Uzbeks resumed their normal state of internecine strife. General Chernaïev, commanding Russian troops, and watching proceedings from Shemkand, sent out a "corps d'observation" towards Tashkand, and this detachment was attacked by Khokandians; whereupon the Russians faced and defeated their assailants, and *en revanche* stormed and captured their fort of Niaz Beg. This led to further reprisals, and finally the capture of the city of Tashkand. The Bokharians demanded evacuation of the place by Chernaïev, and on the General's refusal to comply with the demand, stopped a Russian karavan, and imprisoned the merchants who composed it. After further measures of retaliation on either side, the contending parties arrived at a quasi-friendly understanding, and a scientific and diplomatic mission was sent by Russia to Bokhara. The Amir, however, when he had given the delegates a fair reception, reverted to the normal treachery of his race, and forcibly detained them. Chernaïev marched out of Tashkand with a force, intending to move on Bokhara; but he was delayed at Jazak, west of Samarkand, attacked, and compelled to retreat to the Sir River. These events occasioned this General's recall from Saint Petersburg, and the appointment of General

Romanovsky as his successor, who reached Tashkand in March, 1866.

The new Commander-in-Chief and Military Governor in Russian Turkistan, under the Governor-General of Orenburg, did not long remain quiet at his post. He had been sent out, apparently, to act as much as possible in a conciliatory spirit, but was evidently not hampered by inexpedient restrictions. The water communication established on the Sir River enabled steamers to ascend from Fort Perovsky to Chinaz below Tashkand, so that the new position occupied was not without natural advantages in regions so remote from the civilized world as the Tartar Khanates. This facility of transport was turned to account, and Romanovsky soon found himself actively engaged with the Bokharians, notwithstanding the smooth speeches with which he was greeted by them. Marching out of Fort Chinaz to an entrenched camp defended by their artillery at Irjar, he stormed and carried their works, and routed them with great slaughter. A few days later he took the fortified and populous city of Khojand, after a week's investment and bombardment; thus severing, as it were, Kokhand from Bokhara,—this place being intermediate to the two. These operations were succeeded by a lull; the Russian delegates were released and returned, but there was no sign of settled peace. Nor could there well be under the circumstances:

for Russia took Khokandian towns and forts claimed by Bokhara, and Bokhara felt the blow to be one levelled at her own power in Central Asia. That this state of things gave rise to internal revolution cannot be held surprising. An outcry was raised against the ill-starred Amir by the Mullahs, or priesthood, and others, and the standard of rebellion was raised by a bold and ambitious chief. General Romanovsky had been replaced in Russian Turkistan by General Kauffman, its Military Governor, I believe, at the present hour; and the question of administering the newly-acquired province, as well as policy to be pursued with the neighbouring chiefs and people, engaged the serious attention of the higher authorities.

General Kauffman entered into negotiations with the Amir of Bokhara; but the excitement of his subjects against the latter was such, that before a treaty could be signed, a holy war was proclaimed, and the neighbouring Khans of Khiva and Khokand called on to join the Bokharians. It was clear, however, that nothing but a decisive victory could produce an efficient alliance against the common enemy, and Kauffman shattered their hopes of unanimity and success by adding Samarkand to the list of captured cities. Perhaps no place in the whole of Central Asia had been more universally lauded and esteemed than this. It had become a sort of by-word to the Oriental for all that was

poetical and luxurious in life, and, even in its comparatively fallen state, was, theoretically, to the Uzbek what Baghdad is to the Arab, and Shiraz to the Persian.

Finally, to the capture of Samarkand succeeded that of Kette Kurgan, one of the strongest of Bokhara forts, together with a series of sharp decisive actions in which Generals Kauffman and Abramoff contrived to rout their ill-disciplined opponents. The Amir of Bokhara, driven to extremities, made peace with his conquerors, who consummated the act by assisting him to quell rebellion, and restoring to him the town of Karshi which they had taken, on his behalf, from the rebels, one being his own son. According to Captain Trench, in his careful digest of the "Russo-Indian Question," Sáiad Muzafar, the reigning Amir of Bokhara at the particular period referred to, "sent envoys to General Abramoff with presents, to express his gratitude for the services he had rendered him."

If we are to accept without reserve the significant paper forwarded to 'The Times' from its Persian correspondent on the 16th November last year, a treaty of mutual obligations was signed by Adjutant-General Kauffman on the part of Russia on the 29th January, 1868, and by Khuda Yar Khan, ruler of Khokand, on the 13th February following, by which Russian merchants and Russian merchan-

dise were to be treated with marked favour. In like manner a treaty of commerce most advantageous to Russian commerce, and guaranteeing protection to Russian subjects, was accepted by Sáiad Muzafar, Amir of Bokhara, after a second cession of a captured town was made to him in 1870. Of the Khan of Khokand the writer in the 'Official Gazette' says, that he "being our nearest neighbour, was the first to realize the impossibility of military resistance." As to the Amir of Bokhara, he "had convinced himself that we wished to live with him in peace and amity, and had no desire to extend our possessions at his expense."

In respect of Khiva, the paper says, "All our attempts to establish friendly intercourse with that Khanate came to nothing, and, indeed, only served to open our eyes to the hostile dispositions of the Khiva Government. Yet all we asked for was that the Russian subjects detained as prisoners at Khiva should be set at liberty, that our traders should have free access to the Khanate, and that they should be protected while there. These, our just and moderate demands, were either left altogether unanswered, or on other occasions declined, or made the pretext for raising absurd pretensions. Matters cannot possibly remain in this state; the less so as the maintenance of order and quiet in our Orenburg Steppes is altogether dependent on our relations with Khiva."

The latest intelligence that we now possess is to the effect that three Russian columns are to march upon Khiva, one from Orenburg in the north, one from the Caspian, and one probably from the eastward or some part of Russian Turkistan. The most frequented and best known routes, and the most easily traversed and shortest, are those taking a north-easterly direction from the Caspian, on the eastern shores of which are Russian forts or depôts at Tiuk Karagan, Bekter Liman, Krasnavodsky, Mulla Kari, and the little Balkan at Chikishlar, occupied so late as November, 1871; and down to the extreme angle of the coast at Ashurada in the Bay of Astrabad. The two last-named posts must be held especially important, as they command the mouths of the Atrak and Gurgan rivers, whence pass the mountain chains and valleys marking the Northern frontier of Persia, and opening out a ready road to the east and south-east, wholly independent of, and unconnected with, the mountainous districts of the Oxus-sources which have recently engaged the attention of geographers and politicians at home.

PERSIA.

Persia and Afghanistan are both, as it were, geographically shut out of the Central Asian belt represented by the Independent Khanates and Chinese Tartary; but many geographers would, I believe, be content to admit them as essential and legitimate parts of Central Asia. What I have to

say of the former has either originated or been confirmed by personal experience. Of the latter, I can speak from a tolerably long acquaintance with its people, and a recent journey into one of its western districts.

I need not tell you how old a country is Persia, how powerful and extensive she was in the days of Ahasuerus, who reigned five centuries before the Christian era, "from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces;" how great at the Macedonian conquest. We must be careful not to compare the "Persia," distinguished in ancient days as a mere province like the neighbouring Media, Carmania, and Susiana, with the great Empire which bore that name, has borne it from time immemorial, and bears it at this hour.* Even under her Muhamadan rulers she has attained, at times, a reputation of which Turkey in its palmy days might be envious; but her splendour at such periods has been rather in flashes; and to the "came, saw, conquered" of her modern warrior kings might with equal propriety be added the words "and lost again."

Persia has of late years been striving to recover something of the outlying regions she has held under her monarchs of the Safavian dynasty, who reigned from A.D. 1478 to 1722. But only the East has

* For the student of geography and ethnology it is hardly necessary to refer to the valuable and comprehensive notes to Professor Rawlinson's 'Herodotus,' as the source of full information on these heads.

been open to her encroachments; and the great moral roller of annexation set going by her Government has been therefore confined in its movements to one particular quarter, the Afghan and Baluch frontiers. This, you will observe, is precisely the same direction as that towards which Russia is approaching from the far North, and its terminus, irrespective of China and the far East, is British India. On the West, Persia has a neighbour who, even if not sufficiently strong to resist her armies, can shelter herself under the ægis of civilized mediation. But Turkey *is* the stronger of the two, and is, moreover, careful of having a strong Government on her Asiatic frontiers. On the South, there is the sea, that most effectual of all barriers to Oriental aggression, except where there is a fleet, a requirement barely in accordance with the genius of the Persian people. On the North, as we have shown, there is Russia, and Russia's move to the Atrak River sets a bar to the extension of her weaker neighbour's territory in that direction. Yet it is not much more than one hundred years ago that the Persian Empire extended to the Oxus. Well might Purchas be supposed to have in view the modern conquerors of Turkistan when he wrote in the dawn of the seventeenth century:—"I know not how Divine Providence seemeth to have set those Scythian stints to the Persian proceedings; those great monarches, both in the elder, and our

later world, ever finding those Northern windes crossing, and in some dismall successe prohibiting their ambition that way." *

Before the famine of the last two years, Persia was estimated to possess a population under five millions. Of these a fifth were supposed to be the inhabitants of large towns or cities, and nearly two-fifths were Turks, Arabs, Kurds, and other members of nómad tribes. The most populous city is Tabriz, in the West; next in order are Tehran, Ispahan, and Mashhad; none are, according to the returns, equal in numbers to Hull or even Portsmouth. The extent of the whole country is about 700 miles from north to south, with 900 from east to west, and the small proportion of seven inhabitants to the square mile has been considered a correct representation. Some large tracts of Eastern Baluchistan, found to have been possessed by Persia within the last few years, may need inclusion in this rough estimate; but on the other hand, the famine must have sorely diminished the numbers of the sparse population.

I have myself travelled over the country in nearly every direction during the last eight or nine years. In 1865 I landed at Enzeli in the south-west of the Caspian, and proceeded, *viâ* Resht and Kazvin, to Tehran, the capital. Thence, after a delay of four months on duty, I moved on to Ispahan, and turning

* His 'Pilgrimage,' p. 401.

eastward to Yezd and Kirman, continued my route to the sea-coast through Baluchistan. From Enzeli, on the Caspian to Charbar, the small fishing village then reached, the distance may be roughly computed at 1520 miles. Of this I performed 450 post, or "chapar," as it is called, 840 by marching stages on my own horses, and 230 on a camel. The posting is exciting, and not unpleasant for a day or two, but becomes irksome without a companion or some strong incentive to progress. Much, however, depends on the horse; for it may be quite as wearying to ride 20 miles on an expended animal as four times the distance on four decent roadsters. You divide your luggage with your servant, and may further dispose of a pair of well-packed saddle-bags by using the back of a third horse belonging to the post-horse groom. Any distance between 60 and 100 miles a day may be reckoned fair "chaparing." I will not describe the mysteries of camel driving. Once on the back of the animal, and risen with him, you have his nose-rope put into your hands, and you soon discover what to do with it.

In 1867, I landed at Poti, on the Mingrelian coast of the Black Sea, and finding my way, in a troika, or open cart, drawn by three horses, to Kutais, and thence, in a tarantasse, or springless carriage, to Tiflis and the Persian frontier on the Arras, I took post-horses again from the latter point to Tehran. Thence, after a delay of more than

three months at the capital, broken by a ride to Hamadan (Ecbatana) and back, I posted to Baghdad, in Turkish Arabia, and proceeded from that city by water to Bombay. The total of the land journey thus performed, including the Hamadan visit, was 1740 miles, the whole of which (400 odd miles of Caucasian jolting excepted) was by horse-post.

In 1870, I again passed through Persia, from the Caspian to the Makran coast, reaching the sea on this occasion at Gwádar, a port about 80 miles east of Charbar, whither I had marched some years before by land from Karáchi, in Sind. I returned by sea to Bushire, in the Persian Gulf, and from Bushire to Tehran and Enzeli, having performed altogether a land journey of more than 2000 miles.

And in 1871–2, I made the journey from Bandar Abbas, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, to the Afghan frontier in Sistan, thence moving to Mashhad in Khorasan, thence to Tehran, and again to Enzeli on the Caspian, a further distance of more than 2000 miles.

On the two last occasions I marched with fellow-countrymen, with excellent Persian servants, and for three-quarters of the way with tents and purchased horses, leading an out-door life of the healthiest kind, save at the setting in of the hot season, and one or two exceptional changes of weather and temperature. If I rejoiced more than

my neighbours at exchanging the vicissitudes of Persian travel for Russian steamers and Russian railways, it may be that there was more mental holiday in the one than the other.

I mention these somewhat egotistical facts not with the irrelevant object of showing the amount of mileage performed in so many hours, but to explain how I have become personally acquainted with Central Asia, or at least its outlying regions to the south-west, and what opportunities I have had of personally studying the character of the people. Were it a question of riding long distances in short spaces of time, or traversing and retraversing certain sections of Persia, I could not pretend to achievements such as performed by my younger associates, the officers of the Persian telegraph.

To summarize my own impressions of Persia as a country, and its inhabitants as a people, I must ask you to suppose a high land of the extent already stated, dropping to the Caspian Sea for nearly one-third of its northern frontier, and to the Persian Gulf in illustration of its southern limit. The low-lands naturally are the tracts near the sea-coast. In the north they are covered with forest, and the climate there is damp, feverish, relaxing; in the south they are dry and barren, and the winds are hot and violent, yet a relief to the scorching summer atmosphere. In the central high lands (and Persia generally may be understood in this division) there

are few rivers, and the country is either composed of parallel mountain ranges and broad intervening plains, or of irregular mountain masses with fertile valleys, basins, and ravines. For irrigation the plains and valleys depend on the mountains, and at the base of these are "kanats," or underground canals, which, with watercourses on the surface, are scattered throughout the land. Yet where rain and snow fail during the year, there is scarcity of water; and where both are wanting there is distress. The valleys and ravines are more fertile than the plains, affording often bright, picturesque, and grateful prospects, while the latter are for the most part barren and sandy wastes, scored or streaked, as it were, rather than ornamented, with patches of green oases. Forests are rare, and not dense; numerous gardens are commonly found in the neighbourhood of large towns, not cared for as with us, yet pleasant in their wildness; and there are many beautiful trees usually also near the centres of population. Cities are not such as we should suppose them, estimating from experience in Europe. The passing stranger sees no street in any of them at all comparable to a respectable street or building, as England, France, or Germany rate structural respectability. Blank mud walls and narrow, ill-paved thoroughfares are the rule; the windowed or terraced front of a Persian house is for the inner court or inner precincts of the abode, and not for

the world without. Some mosques are handsome, some karavanserais solid, some bazars highly creditable to the designer and builder; but everything is irregular, nothing is permanent, and architectural ruin blends with architectural revival in the midst of dirt, discomfort, and a total disregard of municipal method. Even Constantinople and Cairo cannot bear the ordeal of close inspection. Beautiful and attractive as they may be from without—and the first has a charm beyond description—they are palpably deficient in completeness within; and yet Tehran, Baghdad, Ispahan, Tabriz, Mashhad, Shiraz, these are far behind them in civilized construction and order. As for the people, their *physique* is intrinsically fine, but seldom fairly developed. As a rule, the rich and middle classes, despite of abilities and reasoning power, ruin their constitutions by sensuality and dissipation; while the poorer and working classes, with less power of reasoning, but healthier tastes and habits, have barely sufficient sustenance to give nature fair play.

The crown implies despotism; but the Shah, or sovereign of the day, though wayward and capricious enough to do startling acts, is rather cautious than otherwise in the free exercise of his power. The government of the land, if composed of men of the old school, and pursuing its way after the fashion of bygone years, admitting the corrupt and venal practices of its predecessors, is strong,

because it is known to the country and outlying provinces, and because it rules in accordance with custom of time immemorial. If composed of new men, as at present, and ruling more or less abnormally, it grasps at civilization as at something it seeks to appropriate as well as appreciate; but is better known to the foreign Legations at headquarters than through the length and breadth of the land. Under no circumstances can the few favoured individuals forming a Ministry be held to represent the Persian people and Persian nation. These have really no representatives west of Oriental Russia and Turkey; and hence the national feeling towards foreigners entertained in Persia, as a kingdom, can only be partially known to our side of Europe. England has for many years been on intimate relations with her, irrespectively of a little war and an occasional rupture; first in pursuance of our policy towards the first Napoleon, secondly in our endeavour to check Russian encroachment eastward. I am not prepared to say what has been substantially gained in either case, but times have changed sufficiently to cancel the old programme. France is no longer a rival in the sense of hostility, while with Russia we negotiate on her Central Asian movements in the most unreserved and friendly manner.

At the present day there are Legations from England, Russia, France, and Turkey, at the Shah's Court, and Persia sends her envoys to these four

Courts in return. Austria is to be added to the list. It is the policy of the existing Government in Persia to be on good terms with all, and the reigning monarch gives no sign of individual reluctance in accepting the arrangement. I have spoken of the Ministers at the capital. To these should be added the governors of provinces, men who in some cases have won their position by money and influence, in some cases by money alone, for the boon is to the highest bidder. Then there is the priesthood, bigoted and intolerant as a body, but with notable exceptions among individual members. The army is fairly numerous, but poorly organized, boasting excellent material, but insufficiently fostered and developed. Persia is without a fleet, but she has a maritime and chiefly alien population whence sailors might readily be drawn.

Such then, in few words, is Persia,—a country rising, perhaps, in political importance in relation to Europe, but effete as regards her ancient Asiatic *prestige*. Had there been time we might have travelled over a great part of her dominions this evening. As there is none to spare, I will content myself with glancing at a passage of my recent diaries of travel bearing upon the Turkomans, a people in every sense belonging to Central Asia, and *par excellence* to Khiva.

They are divided into nine "Khalk," or people, an Arabic word used in Baluchistan down to the

sea-coast. Of these nine divisions the Yámút, the Goklan, and the Tekke inhabit, or rather overrun, the northern frontiers of Persia, or from the Caspian eastwards, a line generally indicated by the Atrak and Gurgan rivers, the chain of mountains north of Mashhad, and town of Sarrakhs. All organized marauders, mainly plundering with a view to human spoil, while the "beats" of the Yamut and Goklan are the lower eastern shores of the Caspian and valley of the Gurgan respectively, the Tekke moves down from Merv and its neighbourhood into Khorasan and Káian. Their "chapáos," or assaults, are sudden and on open ground, so that flight without dismounting is always practicable. The horses are marvellously swift, and bear away captives as well as captors without strain or effort.

In coming up from Sistan, last year, to Mashhad, I heard many reports of local raids; and at a place called "Seh Deh," or the three villages, north of Birjand, the capital of the Káian district, we were informed that fifty persons had just been carried off from the vicinity by Turkoman robbers. The next day we fell in with a poor dumb vagrant who signified to us by wild pantomimic gestures that he had lost all but life and liberty at their hands. And, indeed, for 260 miles, or from the town of Káian to Mashhad, and for 290 miles from Mashhad to Shahrud, below the south-easternmost shores of the Caspian, 550 miles in all, only seven marches, or

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160 odd miles, could be considered free from Turkoman invasion; and we had to be provided with escorts of cavalry, infantry, and at times, even artillery—for we had a real field-piece and the recognized complement of gunners—to accomplish this part of our journey. With the exception of the irregular footmen, whose appearance was decidedly incompatible with either spectacle or strategy, we had no cause to be dissatisfied with our soldiers. An amusing instance of what duties are assigned and what orders imparted to some of the "sarbaz," or regulars, in Persia, may here be cited.

I had crept out of a small bell-tent one night, and was returning thither to sleep, preparatory to an early morning march, when my attention was arrested by observing the Persian sentry standing with sword ported, watching my movements. The arrangement, whatever it was, had clearly been made for my special benefit; but as I did not require such immediate surveillance, I thought I would dispense with his services. My friend dared not go; he was under orders. There was no need, however, for distress on his account. That he was not really designed for heavy night duty was apparent from his naïve reply to my further questioning as to the exact nature of his instructions.

"Sir, the 'Yáwar' (Major) ordered me to remain only till you were asleep. Then, I was to proceed to my quarters."

Well, we passed through the Turkoman-infested tracts without meeting the enemy, but experience of the country served to convince me of its wretched condition, subject to inroads of so disastrous a nature as those described. It would be well if the Persian Government could stamp out the evil. Russia will probably do so on her side; she has already commenced with the Yamuts on the shores of the Caspian; and a combined movement could hardly fail of success. Whatever may be the true motives and designs of Russia, she can hardly fail to command some sympathy from European States in releasing her own subjects from slavery in Khiva or elsewhere, and preventing a traffic in human beings from being carried on with impunity in the west of Central Asia.

AFGHANISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN.

There now remain Afghanistan and Baluchistan, to complete our survey of the regions between Europe and British India. As parts of Central Asia they hardly demand a detailed examination.

Our geographies inform us that Afghanistan is bounded on the north by Turkistan, east by Hindustan, south by Baluchistan, and west by Persia; that in the direction of east and west it stretches over 500, and north and south over between 400 and 450 miles; that a large portion consists of alternate rocks, mountains, and deserts; that its rivers partake

of the nature of torrents, being nearly all fordable during the greater part of the year, but that the Kabul, Helmand, and Farah are noble streams; that its climate is, in the higher lands, very cold, and in the plains intensely hot, though from its general elevation it is colder than Western Asia, and much colder than Southern Asia. The area is estimated at 220,000 square miles; but these figures must have undergone a considerable change during the revolutions of recent years. Especially notable, as its geographical features, are the mountains belonging to the Hindu Kush system in the north and north-east, the high Suliman range dividing it from India on the east, and the valleys and mountains on the south near the Kelat border.

The origin of the Afghans is a moot point, and involves an inquiry of much ethnological interest. What affinity, if any, they bear to the Arians and Arachosians, whose territories they occupy, or whether they are all or for the most part settlers brought in by conquest or circumstances, we cannot now discuss. Before the successful invasion of Persia in 1722, their nation had been, according to an author of the period, "unknown to Europe, and scarce known to Asia, where it lies in a corner."* When they had overthrown an illustrious dynasty of Persian kings they became suddenly notorious; but

* Father Krusinsky, translated by Father Du Cerceau, 'History of the late Revolutions of Persia,' 2nd Edition. London, 1733.

their notoriety had no permanent honour. In a very few years, and after two short incomplete reigns, they were found incompetent to perform the task taken in hand, and hurled back ingloriously to their own country. Their tribes are numerous, and tribe distinctions kept up with scrupulous care. A wild, warlike people brought up in an atmosphere of deceit and suspicion, it is difficult to surmise what subjects they would prove under a civilized Government; but for my own part I should certainly prefer the Persians as soldiers or servants, and as companions.

Afghanistan, as a consolidated kingdom, dates only from about 125 years ago, when it was founded by Ahmad Shah, Abdali. This chief, taking occasion to break off allegiance to Persia, on the death of his acknowledged sovereign, Nadir Shah, and failing to influence the succession in that country, retired to Kandahar with his numerous followers, and constituted that city the capital of a new State, comprising also within its limits Kabul and Herat. He died after a glorious reign of twenty-five years, remarkable for several invasions of India, the last of which might have given him the throne of Delhi, had his ambition so willed. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Taimur, who transferred his capital from Kandahar to Kabul, and reigned twenty years. On Taimur's death in 1793, his third son, Shah Zaman, became king, but his own weakness and the turbu-

lent rivalry of his brothers caused internal revolution, the fall of the dynasty, and eventually the splitting up of the consolidated kingdom into chiefdoms, of which Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat, were the most important, the last being at one time quite independent of the other two.*

For a long series of years the country was a prey to family feuds and party rebellions; and in 1839 British troops crossed the frontier to support a certain candidate to power. That step was pregnant with disaster, and although the massacre of our troops at Kabul was avenged by an after expedition of no common repute, it must be generally admitted that the prestige of England suffered, at least for a time, from the nature of her interference in the affairs of her Asiatic neighbour. At present the political horizon looks brighter, and Afghanistan turns towards our rulers with an evident increase of confidence. There is now, moreover, under the auspices of the Amir Shir Ali Khan, an appearance of territorial consolidation; and should the latest policy of the Indian Government prove successful, an Afghan monarchy may be revived, if not equal in splendour, at least superior in civilization, to that of Ahmad Shah.

The late Sir Henry Pottinger, who travelled in

* Appendix to 'Historical Memoir on Shikarpur,' printed in Part II. 'Miscellaneous Information on the Province of Sind.'—Bombay Government Records, No. VII., New Series.

Baluchistan in 1810, was for nearly half a century the great, almost the only, authority on that country; but within the last ten or fifteen years it has been opened out by more recent explorers. Shortly before Pottinger wrote, the country was under the rule of a single powerful chief, a nominal tributary to the Afghan king, as he once had been to Persia; but in the hands of his son and successor the despotism gradually waned; many petty chiefs threw off allegiance, and the confederacy, which had been a strong one so long as its component parts were held firmly together, fell to pieces when the grip relaxed, and the master influence was gone. The boundaries of Baluchistan may still be considered to be Afghanistan north, the sea south, India and Persia east and west respectively, and the whole area not less than 160,000 square miles; but a line must be run down the centre to mark off the later acquisitions of Persia; and to find the country which still belongs to the Brahui Khan of to-day, we must look east of the meridian 62°, instead of 58°, according to the position given by all except the newest maps.

This last-mentioned territory touches our Indian frontier from the plains above Shikarpur in Sind, along the mountain ranges called Hála, to the sea west of Karáchi. It is in parts very mountainous, in parts very desert. The maritime tracts between Karáchi and the Persian frontier include the country

of the "Ichthyophagoi," and the modern name Makran bears a strange similarity to the Persian word "Mahi-khorán," a literal translation of the Greek plural word.*

Having myself passed over the utmost length of Makran in the course of duty, entering it twice from the Persian, and once from the Indian, side, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be one of the most desolate and arid of regions. As a rule, the coast is a flat sandy waste; but here and there the inland chains of mountains throw out a spur towards the sea, and a few abrupt cliffs, laved by the salt waters, block up the traveller's path, and drive him to the interior. There are no less than twenty-seven "khors," or mouths of temporary rivers, which come down suddenly after rain, and disappear as rapidly as they rise.

The people of the country are divided by Pottinger† into two great classes, Brahui and Baluchi, between which he finds there is no affinity of language or *physique*. Kelat, the ruling chiefdom in Eastern Baluchistan, or that half which is not under Persian supremacy, is peopled mostly by Brahuis. Like its larger and more important neighbour Afghanistan, although it has been through a phase of hostility towards us, its ruler and people are now our allies, and its relative position to British India

* 'Brief History of Kelat,' by Major Leech, in Asiatic Society's Journal, 1843.

† 'Travels in Baluchistan and Sinde,' Longman, 1816.

may reasonably place it in the category of protected States.

Having thus taken a cursory glance at the countries below that Central Asian belt which may be comprised in the designation of "Turkistan," as well as at the Khanates, which it would be mockery to characterize any longer as "Independent," I will endeavour to impart a practical meaning to our inquiries by bringing before you two or three of the more prominent routes to India from Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand.

From Khiva, whatever way we proceed, the distance is great for a large moving body. The route through Herat, Kandahar, and Quetta would, perhaps, be the shortest and best; but it lies through Afghanistan and Kelat, and only with the active assistance of those States could it be accomplished. From Astrabad, at the south-east corner of the Caspian, to Karachi, there are roads through Sistan, and thence not only by Kandahar, but by Eastern Baluchistan. These might be made available if Persia chose to make them so, as she has done for her own troops; not otherwise. She can bring her soldiers to Peshin in the Kej valley, within 400 miles of Karachi; but the distance from the Caspian would exceed 2000 miles, and many marches are in a complete desert.

From Bokhara and Khokand there are roads through Kabul, or Kashgar in the far east. The

first would necessitate a continuance by the Khaibar Pass to Peshâwar, or by the Bolan Pass to Shikarpur. The difficulties of the Khaibar have been proved by our own troops; they would be great for any troops, except these had a common cause and object with the mountain tribes around; and if such contingency were to arise, there might be left to the new-comers a choice of passes. The Bolan is not new to us, and is one much used by our Kabul and Bokhara-going Indian merchants. The second, or Kashgar road, is now engaging marked attention in a commercial rather than strategical point of view; and whether communications to that town and to Yarkand be carried on through the Pamir highlands, or through Leh, or both, in either case over immense elevations, must remain a question for the future to decide.

On commencing the present paper, I had purposed to seek, in contradistinction to the political and general geography of Central Asia, a separate argument, as it were, in the Central Asian Question. But even had your patience not been tried by a longer exposition, under the former head, than originally contemplated, I think that an understanding on the position and character of the States between Europe and British India will suffice to remove all doubt as to the nature of the question thence arising. If Russia ask herself what is her next move, and whither do her conquests tend,

England may, with equal propriety, ask how the late Russian moves should affect her present policy, and how may the coming moves affect the future peace and security of her Indian empire?

Each of these is literally a "question." The two together, and, it may be, many more ambiguities combined, make up the general question.

So far as England has moved in the matter, she has drawn out a line of frontier north of Afghanistan, which Russia has agreed to respect. This frontier takes within the territories of the Amir Shir Ali,—

1st, Badakhshan and Wakhan, from the Sari Kul on the east, to the junctions of the Gokcha and Oxus. 2nd, Kunduz, Khulm, and Balkh, defined by the line of the Oxus prolonged to Khojah Saleh on the Bokhara road. 3rd, The districts of Akcha, Saripul, Maimaneh, Shibberghan, and Andkuhi, defined by a line abandoning the left bank of the Oxus, and taking a south-westerly direction till it joins the already recognized Perso-Afghan frontier west of Herat.

And she has, by her officers employed during the last two years and a half, drawn out a line of demarcation between Persia and Afghanistan, in continuation of the Herat frontier line, as also a line of demarcation between Persia and Kelat, for future understanding of boundaries in Baluchistan; which two settlements should supply one continuous

line of frontier for Eastern Persia from Herat to the sea.

These measures, like all public measures, are open to discussion, and the question of their expediency or otherwise is also further illustrative of what is popularly called the "Central Asian Question."

In conclusion, I will venture to add a short remark about travel, and a shorter one about diplomacy. There may not, improbably, be present here both travellers and diplomatists of the future; and if there be, there is just a chance that what I have to say may not be quite valueless to, or quite unremembered by them.

To many minds there is something very attractive in travel; and if we only possess a natural spirit of inquiry and a body unafflicted by ache or disease, the more we travel in early years, the more does the taste grow upon us. The cases are, moreover, not few in which the physical sufferer derives benefit from change of air and scene, even when obtained at the cost of a long journey from home. But I think it will be admitted that more people travel from necessity or for pastime than to add to the knowledge of the mass, and a great many of those do not even take the trouble to jot down their experiences except for the commonplace purpose of personal gain or personal satisfaction. Doubtless, that many a traveller, mute and inglorious so far as

posterity and the world are concerned, would have given to the public a book, or at least a pamphlet or magazine article, had he been pressed by a publisher, or judiciously goaded by a friend; but then, again, why should publishers press for manuscripts except where pecuniary profit is clear? and as for friends, how few there are whose judgment in these cases is unimpeachable! My own travel has been mainly a work of necessity; but its experience has in a great degree warranted me in urging travel upon others as a means of combining knowledge and amusement; the first to be stored in memory and a note-book, for the use of those whom it is likely to benefit most, the second as a preventive of sickness of mind and body, and a healthy stimulant to the worthy use of time.

As for "Diplomacy" I fear the word is often misunderstood both at home and abroad, and translated somewhat metaphorically as double-dealing, instead of in its more literal and professional sense. Surely this interpretation should be rejected in the nineteenth century in every quarter of the globe! A great deal has been often said of the training required for this profession, and especially for dealing with Orientals. Knowledge of the language is, of course, useful, in the East, and knowledge of men and manners, everywhere; but beyond this, I think the training of an English gentleman supplies the best and highest diploma for qualifica-

tion to treat with foreigners as with one's own countrymen. And the more astute or cunning our opponent, the more dangerous and treacherous his fencing—the better foil in our hands is Honesty. Tact is invaluable, but its use need not be derogatory. It may sound like a platitude; but I believe it an important truth, that the highest diplomatic tact is that which makes success the result of untiring and uncompromising straightforwardness, whether exercised in the *salons* of civilized Europe, or on the sandy wastes of Khiva and Khorasan.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY EDWARD ... 6 AND 7, CHARING CROSS.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018